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# ENGLAND TO AMERICA

1876

A NEW-YEAR'S GREETING



By W. J. LINTON



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## ENGLAND TO AMERICA

A NEW-YEAR'S GREETING

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A HUNDRED YEARS!  
Too long for memory of the justest feud!  
Last century's quarrel to its end pursued  
And yours the triumph, may not we grasp hands,  
Now each one stands  
    Apart from fears?

The later war  
Rending your heart, that strife in your own house,  
Well over, fair Peace having smooth'd your brows,  
Let your smile travel to the elder foe;  
Nor care to show  
    A time-heal'd scar!

Or would you say —  
“In our great day of danger and distress  
You took the wrongful side”? So! Ne'ertheless  
We welcomed unbound Fortune's rolling wheel,  
When 'neath your heel  
    Rebellion lay.

But did we first  
Mistake? I trow not; though, it may be, some  
Dealt falsely in our name. Nor were *we* dumb  
Whose English justice look'd toward the Slave,  
Bidding you brave,

For him, the worst.

I dare to speak  
For England, since I saw our workmen starve  
By the closed cotton-mills, yet never swerve  
From sympathy: ay! they, whom your grief slew,  
Still pray'd for you,

Though hunger-weak.

From out the crowd  
Of famishing thousands went one only cry:  
"God of the Poor! give Right the victory!"  
Their fleshless hands held up your cause to bless, —  
Their own distress

No grudge allow'd.

So *England* pray'd.  
O, the real heart of England judged aright  
Your agony: our hope stood through the fight,  
Even in the doubtfullest moment, with the North.  
Is there no worth

In prayers heart-said?

Yet, this denied  
(Truly it cannot be — but say it were),  
You in your victory have paused to spare  
Your brothers : we are also of your blood, —  
Misunderstood,  
    Not less allied.

Though there were wrong,  
And though our old-time fault had borne ill fruit,  
Still would I plead 'gainst all that maketh mute  
The claim of kindred. Nay ! why should I plead ?  
They speak instead  
    Whose voice is strong.

They plead — your own :  
Alfred, to Shakspeare, — Eliot, Hampden, Vane, —  
*Your* Milton, and *your* Cromwell ; with a chain  
Of words and deeds they draw you to our side, —  
Nor lived and died  
    For us alone.

They hold our hands,  
Bring us together. Can we keep aloof ?  
Once did you answer : “ Under heaven’s roof,  
Thicker is blood than water ! ” Let it be, —  
Not neighbourly,  
    But brother lands !

Ay! the world through,  
Brothers, to lead the onset of the Free.  
The heritage that Wickliffe left us we  
Bear to mankind, our firm-united strength  
Reaching the length  
Of False and True.

*Brothers!* that word  
Makes Tyranny weak; Wrong flies, nor looks behind,  
Driven as dry leaves before the herald wind  
That clears the way for Spring's most gentle flowers.  
'O waiting hours!  
Your plaint is heard.

Land named of hope!  
Our best have hail'd the promise of thy growth;  
Surely hath honour's race-ground room for both  
America and England, side by side,  
Yet leaving pride  
Sufficient scope.

New England! ours  
Art thou, as England's thine: thy children own  
The common parentage. Nor they alone,  
But wheresoe'er is heard our English tongue —  
World-widely flung  
For coming hours.

Be with us then,  
Thou greater England! second but in time:  
Our age shall welcome our young giant's prime,  
As in his sons a father takes delight,  
Proud of the height  
    Of younger men.

O'erstride our fame!  
Step past the extremest stretch of our renown!  
Wreath round Columbia's head the laurel crown  
Our old heroic worth can well assign!  
The crown be thine —  
    In England's name!

For we are one, —  
In race, in will, in energy the same:  
Twin aspirations of one-tongued flame.  
England were fain to see you climb beyond  
Our hopes most fond,  
    And all we have done. —

So would my thought,  
Prayerful, prophetic, lark-like soaring, rise  
Fluttering its eager wings in farthest skies: —  
Weak pinions of desire! ye must descend;  
What wish may lend  
    The power ye sought?

Stay here your course,  
Between the sheltering sheaves at Bryant's feet ;  
And ask of him, whose song is wisely sweet,  
To uplift the theme of these remitted chords  
With his own words  
Of poet force !

In youthful days,  
Across the ocean hearkening to his lyre,  
I turn'd from Wordsworth's verse sublime to admire  
The Transatlantic Master first discern'd ;  
And my soul yearn'd  
For Bryant's praise.

To-day I bend  
At his high threshold. Might I seek a boon,  
I would bespeak his voice to lead the tune  
Of ENGLISH FRIENDSHIP. Poet ! Seer ! arise  
With prophecies  
From friend to friend !

















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